Legal Aid Ontario
Aide juridique Ontario

About

LAO helps financially eligible, low-income Ontarians through the following services.

Duty counsel

Lawyers who can quickly assess a person's legal problems and provide advice, information and representation to people who would otherwise be unrepresented and unassisted in the courtroom.

Available in over 200 languages, the call centre can provide information about legal aid services, qualification for the various types of services available, and answer questions about legal aid applications.

Summary legal advice

If financially eligible, a client can get advice on criminal, family or immigration issues from a lawyer for up to 20 minutes through LAO's toll-free number.

Community legal clinics

LAO funds 77 independent community legal clinics that can help with housing issues, government assistance cases, civil appeals, tribunals and proceedings.

Certificates

If a client is financially eligible and his/her legal needs warrant it, a client may be able to apply for a certificate, which covers the cost of a lawyer.

Headlines

April

17 LAO joined forces with the Support Team for Abuse Response Today (START) to ensure calls from clients to LAO's toll-free line move to the top of the queue for immediate support.

May

1 At many Superior Court of Justice courthouses, LAO now offers support from on-site family law lawyers and immediate support from LAO's toll-free telephone service if duty counsel is providing services to the person on the other side of a client's dispute.

6 Provincial government invests $30 million in legal aid services.

8 LAO opens Integrated Legal Services Office in Ottawa which offers expanded services.

9 LAO is collaborating with experts in both the mental health and justice systems in the development of its new multi-year strategy to improve and expand legal aid services for clients with mental illness.

16 LAO releases clinic reform future directions paper.

June

6 LAO pilots a new process for change of solicitor requests from clients.

16 LAO opens a new family law service centre in Welland to offer low-income Niagara region residents a one-stop source of support for legal advice, document preparation and duty counsel assistance.

Client Services

Legal Aid Ontario's toll-free call centre

Calls are streamed into one of two tiers.

Tier 1

Clients are matched to a service that meets their legal aid needs or are referred to other programs.

3.2%

Call volumes for tier 1 dropped by 3.2 per cent, to 64,521 in Q1 2013/14 from 66,668 in Q1 last year.

54 seconds

Average wait time in Q1 compared to 1:18 minutes in the same period last year.

Tier 2

Clients are assessed for financial eligibility, provided with legal information or referred to staff lawyers for legal advice in either family law, criminal law or immigration law. Applications for certificates are also made at this level.

15%

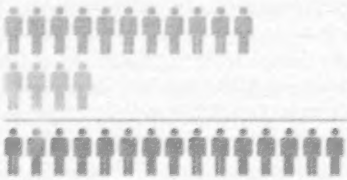
Call volumes for this period dropped 15 per cent to 23,390 from 27,533 because calls are now more effectively triaged from Tier 1. Clients who require summary legal advice (SLA) can now be transferred directly from Tier 1 to an SLA lawyer, bypassing Tier 2.

3 min 38 sec

Average wait time in Q1 compared to 6:03 minutes in the same period last.

Duty Counsel persons assisted

The number of persons assisted by duty counsel has decreased by 14 per cent in Q1 compared to the same period in the previous year.



	2013/14	2012/13
Criminal	109,540	128,938
Civil	37,465	41,274
Total	147,005	170,212

Dispositive Services

Dispositive services help a case progress towards resolution.

6,990 civil/family assists
compared to 7,391 for Q1 2012/13

Civil/family dispositive services include:

- arguing emergency motions
- obtaining consent orders
- arguing motion/application/ adjournments
- supporting enforcement proceedings
- supporting inter-jurisdictional support hearings
- conducting CFSA temporary care and custody, CFSA status review, CFSA apprehension
- conducting parole hearing or disciplinary hearings

21,974 criminal assists
compared to 24,690 for Q1 2012/13

Some criminal dispositive services include:

- trials
- withdrawal of all charges
- guilty pleas/speaking to sentence
- Gladue submissions
- judicial interim release proceedings
- diversion/extra-judicial sanctions
- peace bond/recognizance
- hearings to rescind bench warrants
- mental health assessment order hearings, sentence reviews
- appeals *de novo*

Legal Aid Certificates

Acceptance rates for applications

86%

Acceptance rate

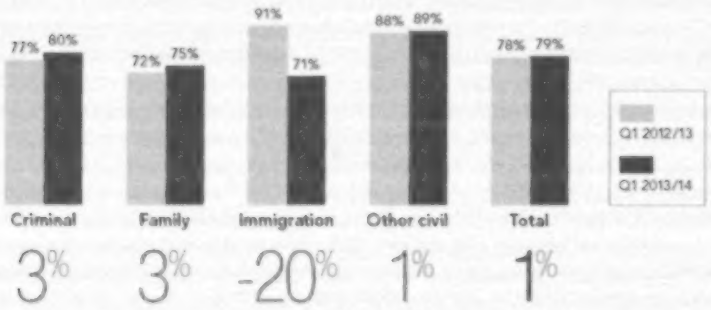
For the first quarter of 2013/14, 22,283 people out of 25,776 applicants received certificates.

Applications		
Criminal	16,783	-6%
Family	6,304	5%
Immigration and refugee	1,501	-52%
Other civil	1,188	2%
Total	**25,776**	**-8%**

Changes to Canada's refugee law system in December 2012 led to a 52 per cent decrease for immigration and refugee certificate applications in Q1 2013/14 compared to the same period last year.

Same-day decisions

Percentage of decisions made the same day.



79%

Percentage of decisions made on the same day as of June 2013 compared to 78% for the previous year.

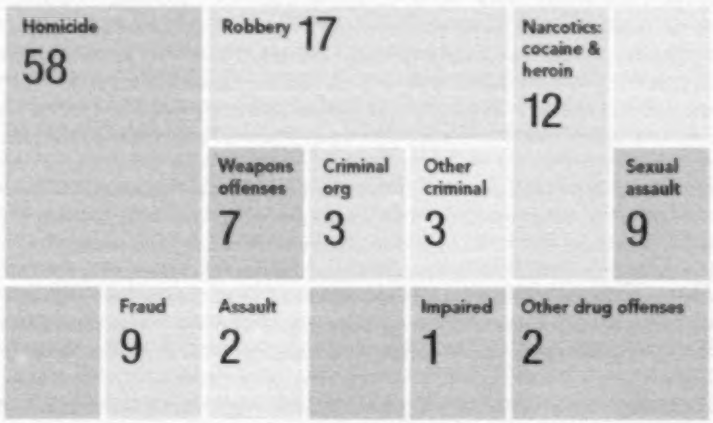
Big Case Management (BCM)

$6.3M

BCM program costs as of June 2013 compared to $6.7 million from the previous year.

BCM certificates

LAO issued a total of 123 certificates for the BCM program YTD.



Financial Update

Operations for YTD

Operating Budget ($M) Q1	
Government of Ontario	$ 88.726
Law Foundation	5.356
Client contributions	2.632
Client and other recoveries	0.304
Miscellaneous	0.177
Total Revenue	$ 97.195
Core business expense	
Certificate program - BCM	$ 6.362
Other	39.973
Staff law offices	3.171
Clinic program	18.799
Duty counsel program	11.080
Service innovation projects	0.026
Total Core business expense	$ 79.411
Service provider support	$ 1.332
Administrative expenses	7.924
Other expenditures	1.648
Program Support	5.399
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	**$ 95.714**
OPERATING SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)	**$ 1.481**

*Note:

As discussed with LAO and acknowledged in LAO's Clinic Law Services Strategic Directions Paper, Ontario's legal aid clinics are planning to achieve $5.5M in notional administrative savings in the clinic system over this fiscal year.

In Q1, clinics achieved of $250,000 of this $5.5M in savings. LAO recognized about $750,000 of estimated return of clinic surpluses to LAO on a one-time basis. As a result, LAO recognized $1M as savings against notional administrative savings of $5.5M, leaving a $4.5M gap to address in 2013/14. To cover this gap, LAO has allocated, on a one-time basis for 2013/14, $4.5M of its Law Foundation of Ontario (LFO) revenues.

Legal Aid Ontario

40 Dundas Street W.
Suite 200
Toronto, Ontario
M5G 2H1

Telephone
416-979-2352

Toll free
1-800-668-8258

Fax
416-979-8669

Email
info@lao.on.ca

Website
www.legalaid.on.ca

LEGAL AID ONTARIO
AIDE JURIDIQUE ONTARIO